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The impact of intranets on college and university public relations professionals

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THE IMPACT OF INTRANETS ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

by
Daniel Murphy

A Thesis

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Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis was to determine the impact of intranets with regard to the future job responsibilities and functions of public relations professionals in the field of higher education.

The hypothesis of this paper was that as more and more colleges and universities begin embracing intranets as a communication tool, the issue of information management will arise. The question of who or what department will be responsible for the information that is placed on a educational institution's intranet will be consistent and problematic.

College and university public relations professionals need to be aware of the problems, opportunities, changes and challenges that intranets will bring to an educational institution.

A search of previous research relevant to this study was conducted. Original research was conducted in the form of a mail survey randomly distributed to 100 public relations managers, directors or vice presidents at four-year colleges and universities across the country. The survey was used to ascertain the current and future influence of intranets on public relations professionals.

A major survey finding revealed that 80 percent of college and university public relations professionals believe that working with intranets will be a future job function.

Mini Abstract

Murphy, Daniel.   The impact of intranets on college and
                                             university public relations professionals.
                                             1997. Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin.
                                             Public Relations.

Through a review of literature and a mail survey, this thesis sought to determine

the impact of intranets on college and university public relations professionals.

Recommendations for public relations professionals in higher education were

developed based on the literature and survey research findings with regard to the future

job responsibilities, communication functions and influence of intranets.

A major survey finding revealed that 80 percent of college and university public

relations professionals believe that working with intranets will be a future job function.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who have given me the inspiration, desire and knowledge I needed to complete my master's degree and thesis.

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To my wonderful parents, Thomas and Virginia Murphy—thank you for your unwavering support during all of my academic pursuits. Without your generous help, love, guidance, encouragement and financial support, I never would have finished.

And finally, to my beautiful fiancée, confidant and best friend, Susan Enzman—thank you for always being there, understanding and believing in me. Flowers are on the way. I love you.

Daniel Murphy

June '97

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Chapter One

Introduction

College and university administrators seeking to communicate with employees have had a variety of traditional communication options available. Everything from inter-office memos, newsletters, and meetings to telephone voice mail and electronic mail (e-mail) are being used to help manage the communication process with employees.

The drawbacks to these types of employee communication options are that they are often slow and mostly one-way channels of communication that don't offer employees the means to respond with comments and feedback. Too often news and important messages contained in conventional employee newsletters and memos are outdated or irrelevant by the time the information reaches employees. With the introduction of e-mail, employees now have the ability to instantly provide feedback to managers after an important message, but it still remains a relatively one-way tool.

Two types of computer software applications are on the verge of dramatically changing the way college and university public relations professionals communicate with other employees. Both of these internal communication networks (ICN) software packages allow users to connect to each other and share information. But each program does this differently, and it is these differences that can have a dramatic impact on the cost, ease of use and job responsibilities of a college or university public relations officer.

Groupware

The first type of computer software application is called groupware and is led by software applications like IBM's Lotus Notes and German software manufacturer SAP's R/3. Groupware connects a group of computers attached to a local-area network (LAN) to each other so information can be quickly and easily exchanged by all those connected. Groupware typically supports e-mail, database information, meeting schedules, document sharing and electronic newsletters. A major benefit of using groupware is its strong security management features, a function intranets still have not achieved fully.

Groupware has been around for years but it is only now refined enough to be used by corporations. The main drawbacks of using groupware are the high expense of customizing the proprietary software code, its mix of technologies that require users to learn separate commands and procedures for each function of the program, and its difficult-to-manage database operations.[1]

Intranets

The second type of computer software application is a collection of world wide web/internet software applications called an intranet. Led by Netscape's Navigator and Microsoft's Explorer web browsers, it refers to an organization's internal web site or

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[1] Elizabeth Corcoran, "Look Out Internet, Here Comes Intranets: Firms Using New Technology to Build Internal Communications Webs," *Washington Post*, April 6, 1996, Section C, p. 10.

group of web sites that share information and are accessible only to employees.

Intranets differ from groupware-based products on a few key points. First, intranets are based on common open-standard HTML web-browser technology while groupware is based on proprietary software. Because groupware is based on proprietary software, an organization must purchase and install a $150 software program like Lotus Notes on each desktop personal computer in the organization and then pay a software programmer to customize the groupware to their needs.[2] The cost of doing this can become expensive. It may be more cost effective for an organization to spend $20 per desktop for an intranet-based ICN that supports functions like e-mail, databases, scheduling, document sharing and electronic newsletter functions.

Second, intranets require little if any additional training since most employees are already familiar with linking to other web pages by clicking on the blue high-lighted words or graphics buttons.[3]

Finally, intranets can present information in the same manner on any computer operating system. The standard programming language of the web is HTML (hypertext markup language) which can be read by a variety of computer operating systems including Mac OS, UNIX and DOS/Windows (IBM PC). This benefits an organization with employees that use IBM PC/compatible computers in their accounting department and

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2 Amy Cortese, "Here Comes the Intranet," *Business Week*, February 26, 1996, p. 78.
3 Cortese, Ibid., p. 78.

Apple Macintosh computers in their publications department, as both can receive the same information on their computers without expensive software rewrites, hardware upgrades or new training. This cannot be done with groupware without rewriting all the programming code.[4]

Listed below are other benefits and drawbacks of using an intranet-based communications system:

Benefits: [5]

• Easily download files off the internet or organization's server.

• Intranets use a graphical user interface.

• Offers intuitive data linking through highlighted HTML.

• Can share information with colleagues from around the world behind a secure firewall security fence.

• Can be placed easily on a LAN or WAN that connects to the internet.

• Extends organization's resources (documents, video, sound, multimedia).

• New applications and software updates can be distributed quickly.

• Can distribute information instantly throughout an organization.

• Sensitive information can be encrypted for security reasons.

• Information can be authenticated with "digital signatures" from the sender.

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[4] Cortese, Ibid., p. 78.
[5] Ambegaonkar, Prakash, *Intranet Resource Kit*, Osbourne/McGraw Hill, 1997, p. 7.

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• Newsgroups and list servs provide various on-line, interactive discussion topics.

• Offers on-line meetings for employees in different locations through

   video conferencing.

• Intranets provide a way to schedule organizational activities, tasks and calendars.

• Relatively inexpensive to maintain and upgrade.

Drawbacks: [6]

• Employee resistance to new technologies.

• New skills needed for managers to design and place information on web pages.

• Intranets are subject to the limitations of the employee's personal computer.

• Do not offer the same robust features that groupware can provide.

• Intranets are difficult to customize for the special needs of an organization.

• May not meet the needs of a particular organization's corporate culture.

Intranets and Higher Education

In *The Intranet Resource Kit*, Dr. Prakask Ambeaonkar argues that intranets can

provide a partial solution to communication problems at large colleges and universities

(See figure 1.1[7] on page 6). With hundreds of students, communication with students can

easily breakdown.[8] With an intranet, professors can list homework assignments and notes

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[6] Ambegaonkar, Ibid., p. 60.
[7] Ambegaonkar, Ibid., p. 144.
[8] Ambegaonkar, Ibid., p. 145.

on the web site for students who can't make it to class and collaborate on books or projects with colleagues at universities across the country.

Students can have instant access to grades, register for classes, pay their tuition and fees and even see what's for lunch in the dining hall—all though secure transactions on the school's intranet.

Administrators can place newsletters, job announcements, position papers, media requests, correct any rumors or misguided and fractured information, which is particularly useful for large colleges and universities that have campuses in different cities and around the world. Human resources can even place sensitive employee (which can only be accessed by that employee) files on the intranet site, giving employees 24-hour, instant access to important information.

Below is a diagram (figure 1.1) detailing the uses of an intranet at a typical university. The firewall that surrounds the university's server provides a safe and secure atmosphere to conduct school business for faculty, staff and students.
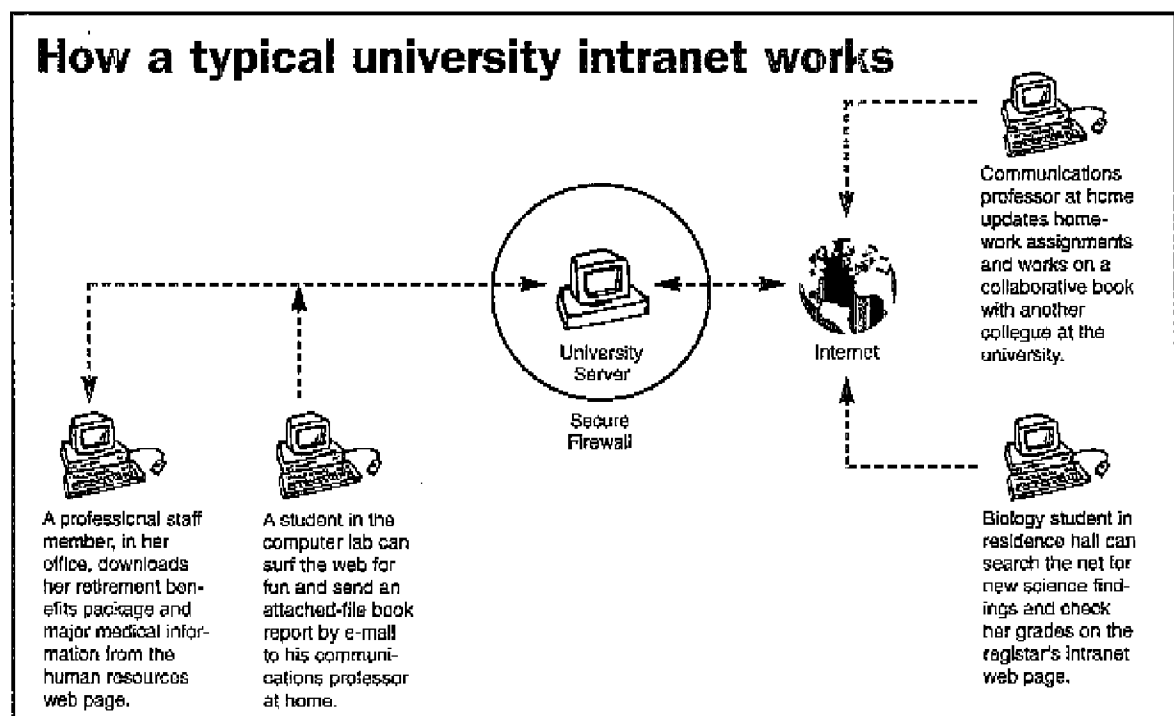

How a typical university intranet works

Communications professor at home updates homework assignments and works on a collaborative book with another collegue at the university.

University Server

Secure Firewall

Internet

A professional staff member, in her office, downloads her retirement benefits package and major medical information from the human resources web page.

A student in the computer lab can surf the web for fun and send an attached-file book report by e-mail to his communications professor at home.

Biology student in residence hall can search the net for new science findings and check her grades on the registar's intranet web page.

Figure 1.1

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Need for the Study

A 1996 survey by Forrester Research of 50 major corporations found that 16 percent have an intranet in place and another 50 percent either plan to or are considering building one.[9] Zona Research, Inc. of Redwood City, CA predicts that sales of intranet servers will reach $4 billion in 1997, and $8 billion in 1998.[10] Steve Jobs, CEO of NeXT Computer, Inc. believes "the intranet has broken down the walls within corporations."[11]

The benefits of intranets have been quickly seized upon by corporations. But those benefits can extend to higher education as well. An intranet not only has the power to change internal employee communication at colleges or universities, but it can also change the way colleges or universities communicate with students. According to Deborah Everhart, internet development coordinator for Academic Computing Services at Georgetown University, "intranets are going to dramatically change the way we do nearly everything in higher education."[12] For example, she thinks professors could post students' grades on an intranet, which in turn, could be accessed by students on the

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[9] Corcoran, Ibid., p. 10.

[10] Bart Ziegler, "The Intranet: Internet software poses big threat to Notes, ibm's Stake in Lotus; Web Programs are Cheaper, Simpler to use to Link a Far-Flung Work Force; but Systems aren't as Secure," *Wall Street Journal,* November 7, 1995, p. 1.

[11] Cortese, Ibid., p. 77.

[12] David L. Wilson, "Campus 'Intranets' Make Information Available to Some, but Not All, Internet Users," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* August 2, 1996, p. A17.

internet. Intranets could also be used for distance learning. A student living outside the school's local area could take courses over the internet using the school's intranet.[13]

However, Lotus Notes became the standard in ICNs a few years ago, as business schools across the country quickly followed the trend and installed a Lotus Notes-based groupware system. William E. Fulmer, director of the George Mason University Graduate Business Institute, uses the Lotus Notes system. Fulmer argues that building an intranet with world wide web software "would [have] cost much more than taking a proven technology and adapting it to our needs. Plus, more and more of our students seemed to be going to work for companies that use Notes."[14]

However, not all agree with Fulmer's recommendation. John E. Stinson, dean of the College of Business at Ohio University, has dropped Lotus Notes after struggling with the program for two years. "The real problem with Lotus Notes is an extremely complex environment for the user. Any of the web browsers are very easy to get, configure, and use. Notes can be very difficult for users to learn."[15]

Everhart believes that ultimately the decision (groupware or intranet) comes down to economics. She believes the decision for a lot of colleges and universities has already

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[13] Wilson, Ibid., p. A17.
[14] Wilson, Ibid., p. A17.
[15] Wilson, Ibid., p. A17.

been made, "if [colleges and universities] have to choose between proprietary software

and Internet software, [they'll] take the Internet software every time."[16]

Everhart concludes that the decision to adopt an ICN system is inevitable and will

have a tremendous impact on the way college and university professionals work in the

future. She thinks it comes down to the fact that "intranets cannot only facilitate the

research and communication needs, but also save money."[17]

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to determine the attitudes, opinions and roles of

college and university public relations professionals with respect to implementing and

using an intranet. Which ICN—groupware or intranets—will dominate campuses across

the country in the near future?

Will working with intranets be a future job function? Will working on intranets be

a requirement for public relations positions at colleges and universities? What do current

professionals at colleges and universities think about this trend? Will these professionals

adopt and adapt to or reject this new technology?

Implementing an intranet can cause radical changes in the communication

process for college and university public relations directors. Will public relations

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[16] Wilson, Ibid., p. A17.
[17] Wilson, Ibid., p. A17.

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professionals at colleges and universities take advantage of the true two-way communication between management and employees that ICNs can offer?

In addition, the author is also seeking to determine whether big or small colleges and universities are adopting or planning to adopt this technology in the near future. And if they are, what type of ICN are they choosing—intranet-based or groupware-based?

Procedure

The author conducted database searches for current literature using several Rowan University library computer databases. The library's ProQuest, ERIC and ABI Business databases were used for primary research. The search examined periodicals dated from August 1995 through August 1996. Reference materials, including CASE Currents magazine and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, were obtained from the Office of University Relations and the Office of University Publications at Rowan University.

Original research for this thesis was conducted in the form of a 17-question survey distributed to 100 college and university public relations directors at four-year colleges and universities. All names were randomly selected from the *1995 CASE Directory of Advancement Professionals in Education*. The author chose to send half of the surveys to colleges and universities with an enrollment of 10,000 students or more to determine if "bigger" schools were adopting ICNs more than "smaller" schools with fewer than 10,000 students.

The author also attended an intranet seminar sponsored by Adobe Systems, IBM,

Netscape Communications and Sun Microsystems on August 6, 1996 in Washington, DC.

The author received a folder containing intranet information and demo software.

In addition, the author conducted on-line internet searches for information using

the Netscape Navigator 2.01 browser and the following internet search engines: Lycos,

Excite, Alta Vista, Yahoo! and InfoSeek.

Limitations

College or university public relations professionals must take many factors into

account not addressed in this paper when a planning or considering an ICN for their

school.

First, the computer software market is dynamic and volatile; therefore,

information presented in this paper will most likely be obsolete after one year.

Second, the author limited the survey to a relatively small sample size of four-year

colleges and universities and did not address two-year and junior colleges. The author's

survey also does not address the two-way communication aspect of implementing an

ICN. While this is one of the most important benefits, the author feels this aspect is too

involved and complex to discuss in a general-issues thesis and believes it could easily be

the subject of another thesis.

Additionally, the author recognizes the thesis does not address the three main problems of an ICN: members of an organization who do not have access to a computer, the members of an organization who are afraid of new technology, and members of an organization who cannot or refuse to learn how to use new technologies.

Finally, because intranets are a relatively new concept, the author limited research to information collected from the sources published after August 1995.

Therefore, this thesis should not be considered a definitive resource for college and university communication and public relations directors, managers and professionals.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study. Most of the definitions listed below are from the PC Webopædia internet web site,[18] and were edited for content. *Java*, *Internal Communication Network (ICN)*, and *Lotus Notes* are the author's own definition.

Applets — A small program designed to be executed from within another application. Unlike an application, applets cannot be executed directly from the operating system. A well-designed applet can be used in many different applications. Please see *Java*.

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[18] PC Webopædia, Sandy Bay Software, Inc. *http://www.sandybay.com*, web site, November 27, 1996.

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Browser — A software application used to locate and display Web pages. Three of the most popular browsers are Netscape Navigator, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and Spyglass Mosaic. All of these are graphical browsers, which means that they can display graphics as well as text. In addition, most modern browsers can present multimedia information, including sound and video.

CASE — Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Firewall — A system designed to prevent unauthorized access to or from a private network. Firewalls can be implemented in both hardware and software, or a combination of both. Firewalls are frequently used to prevent unauthorized internet users from accessing private networks connected to the Internet, especially intranets. All messages entering or leaving the intranet pass through the firewall, which examines each message and blocks those that do not meet the specified security criteria. A firewall is considered a first line of defense in protecting private information. For greater security, data can be encrypted.

Groupware — A software application that helps groups of colleagues attached to a local-area network (LAN) organize their activities. Typically, groupware supports the following operations: 1) scheduling meetings and allocating resources, 2) e-mail, 3) password protection for documents, 4) telephone utilities, and 5) electronic newsletters. Please see *Lotus Notes*.

Homepage — The main page of a web site. Typically, the home page serves as an index or table of contents to other documents stored at the site.

HTML — Short for Hypertext Markup Language, the authoring language used to create documents on the World Wide Web.

Internal Communication Network (ICN) — An organization's network of computers that allows management and employees to exchange information easily.

Internet — A global network connecting more than a million computers. Currently, the internet has more than 30 million users worldwide, and that number is growing rapidly. More than 70 countries are linked into exchanges of data, news and opinions.

Intranet — A web site or group of web sites belonging to an organization that look and act like other web sites, are used to share internal information, and are accessible only to the organization's members, employees, or others with authorized access. Secure intranets are now the fastest-growing segment of the Internet because they are much less expensive to build and manage than private networks based on proprietary protocols.

Java — Sun Microsystems's web authoring language that allows small applications (called applets) to be embedded in web pages.

LAN—See *Network*.

Lotus Notes — IBM's "groupware" application that allows employees of an organization to communicate with each other over the same network.

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Microsoft Internet Explorer — Microsoft, Inc.'s internet web browser.

Netscape Navigator — Netscape Communication's internet web browser.

Network — A group of two or more computer systems linked together. There are many types of computer networks. Two of the most popular are: local-area networks (LANs), the computers are geographically close together (in the same building); and wide-area networks (WANs), the computers are farther apart and are connected by telephone lines or radio waves.

Servers — A computer or device on a network that manages network resources. For example, a file server is a computer and storage device dedicated to storing files. Any user on the network can store files on that server. Servers are often dedicated, meaning that they perform no other tasks besides their server tasks.

WAN—See *Network*.

Web site — A location on the World Wide Web. Each web site contains a home page, which is the first document users see when they enter the site. The site might also contain additional documents and files. Each site is owned and managed by an individual, company or organization.

World Wide Web — A system of Internet servers that supports specially formatted documents. The documents are formatted in a language called HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) that supports links to other documents, as well as graphics, audio,

and video files. This means you can jump from one document to another simply by

clicking on specific hot spots in the text or graphic area.

Chapter Two

Procedures

Literature Search

Database searches were conducted at the Rowan University Library to find current related literature. The library's ProQuest database was used for primary research. The search examined only periodicals dated from August 1995 through August 1996. All of the ProQuest database searches were conducted using the following key words: *intranet, college, university* and *school.*

A search of the ABI Business Abstract database yielded 628 references to the key word *intranet.* Sixty-two references were relevant. A search of the key words *intranet* and *college, university* or *school* found nine references, of which zero were relevant. A search of the newspaper database (*The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*) found 56 total references, of which two were relevant.

Other databases searched include the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) database and Rowan University Library book index. Both the ERIC database and the book index yielded no references.

The author located additional material in the Office of University Relations and the Office of University Publications at Rowan University. The July/August 1996 issue of CASE *Currents* and the August 2, 1996 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* each yielded one relevant reference article.

The author conducted several on-line searches of the internet for information using Netscape Navigator 2.0 and the following internet search engines: Lycos, Excite, Yahoo!, Magellan and Infoseek. The following key words were used during these internet searches: *intranet, college, university* and *school.*

Approximately 30,163 potential reference sources were found through the on-line internet search of the key word *intranet* and 28,527 for *intranet* and *college*. Eleven reference items were found. A search of the internet web site *The Intranet Journal* (http://www.intranetjournal.com) was also conducted.

The author attended an intranet seminar sponsored by Adobe Systems, IBM, Netscape Communications and Sun Microsystems on August 6, 1996 in Washington, DC. One item was found relevant to this study.

A review of key points from the relevant literature follows. This review is organized by topic.

Review of Related Literature

Introduction to Intranets

In "Art, Geeks and Power Ploys: How to Build Your Intranet," David Storm calls the intranet "the corporate world's equivalent of a town hall—places where people meet, greet and share information."[1]

In the article "Intranets: What's All the Excitement?," Shel Holtz calls intranets "an employee communication tool like no other."[2] He explains that intranets can "improve productivity and save money... speed up projects and enhance quality... facilitate two-way communication and multidirectional communication... [and] improve existing processes and simplify work flows."[3]

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[1] David Storm, "Art, Geeks and Power Ploys: How to Build Your Intranet," *Forbes ASAP*, August 26, 1996, p. 38.

[2] Shel Holtz, "Intranets: What's All the Excitement?," *Communication World*, June/July 1996, p. 54.

[3] Holtz, Ibid., p. 55.

The first consideration of an intranet has to be determining who in the organization is ultimately responsible for the content and maintenance of the intranet. Holtz argues in *Communication World*, "An effective intranet cannot be the sole responsibility of either employee communications or the information technology department. It requires a common effort, a partnership between the two functions."[4]

Many different factors should beto considered when managing an intranet site for an organization. In the article "the Web Within," George Taninecz quotes Ken Horner of Deloitte & Touche, who says, "Few decisions associated with intranet implementation are new. The normal place to start is an understanding of what the purpose is for what you're trying to do."[5] Ask these questions:

- Must technology be adapted, or can it be purchased off the shelf?

- What are the internal-support requirements, and where is the company on that learning curve?

- Is the physical infrastructure in place to handle the kind and quantity of traffic moving around the intranet?

Elisabeth Horwitt writes in "Using Policies to Tend the Wild and Woolly Intranet," that one of the biggest problems facing an organization's intranet is that there tends to be no central authority or policy to review the quality and freshness of information that employees place on the intranet. She writes, "the upside of a laissez-faire policy is that employees can get useful information to their colleagues since they're not hampered by an overly restrictive or lengthy review process."[6]

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[4] Holtz, Ibid., p. 57.

[5] George Taninecz, "The Web Within," *Industry Week*, March 3, 1996, p. 51.

[6] Elisabeth Horwitt, "Using Policies to Tend the Wild and Woolly Intranet," *Intranet Magazine*, August 1996, p. 28.

In "Personal Web Pages Transform Information Sharing Within Camp," James Braham demonstrates how the use of an intranet at Silicon Graphics, Inc. (SGI) has changed the flow of information, moving from a top-down structure to a horizontal structure. James writes, "[an employee's] home page is the front door or index to the information a person wishes to share in the company. At SGI, this page may give the person's name, picture, job description, e-mail address, physical location, background or resume, the names and duties and perhaps photos of team or department members, and so forth. Following the home page in this technological hierarchy come the public folders and files, which can be customized in any way and used like a filing cabinet."[7]

Horwitt argues, "the downside, however, is the risk of sensitive material being made generally available without proper need-to-know criteria being applied. [Organizations] with no formal policy for monitoring and reviewing internal web sites are in danger of having their intranets become chaotic and difficult to navigate."[8]

Horwitt believes it is essential that "intranet policy makers represent themselves not as policemen guarding against abuse but as facilitators who help end users ensure that the information they put out on the web is accurate, fresh and easy to locate and understand."[9] Holtz argues this point as well, stating "communicators [should] assume an internal consulting role, helping other departments develop web sites on the intranet that embrace the principles of effective communication."[10]

Effective communication cannot take place without proper organization of materials and information. Taninecz writes, "Deloitte & Touche's Horner compares an

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[7] James Braham, "Personal Web Pages Transform Information Sharing Within Camp," *Machine Design*, January 25, 1996, p. 22.

[8] Horwitt, Ibid., p. 29.

[9] Horwitt, Ibid., p. 29.

[10] Holtz, Ibid., p. 56.

unmanaged intranet to being in the middle of the Library of Congress without a card catalog or lighting." Companies and organizations with large-scale ICNs tend to underestimate the significance of managing and organizing employee information on their site. Hence, they fail to create an easily navagated intranet site that employees will continuely return to for important news and information.[11]

Mark Gibbs gives the following guidelines for intranet development in "Getting Started—A How-to-Guide to Building Your First Intranet:"[12]

- Establish the management dimension of your intranet early: who owns, who funds, who manages.
- If it is consistent with corporate culture, encourage staff to become information publishers. They will do more to make an intranet happen than any amount of content development.
- Decide to what degree and how you will set corporate standards for browsers, e-mail packages, etc.
- Build security into your intranet as a core strategic issue.
- Get top down corporate support for your intranet initiative.
- Keep your eye on the intranet marketplace—new products that could improve your intranet are appearing at an incredible rate.
- Integrate intranet services with existing network services where possible.

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[11] Taninecz, Ibid., p. 49.

[12] Mark Gibbs, "Getting Started: A How-to-Guide to Building Your First Intranet," *Intranet Magazine*, June 1996, p. 36.

Jim Hamerly writes in *Intranet Magazine* that intranet managers and administrators will "often find themselves faced with the daunting task of bringing a corporate look and feel to the myriad documents being posted."[13]

One solution to this problem is the introduction of cascaded style sheets. Hamerly explains in his article that cascaded style sheets are embedded codes in HTML that give an organization's intranet managers "the ability to control the design of a Web site. [They] can control margins, line spacing and placement of [graphic] elements, specify fonts, type sizes and colors. This allows [managers] to easily define a common look and feel across an entire [intranet] site.[14]

This benefits the entire organization because it reduces the amount of time web designers need to spend reformatting new pages or sites, and it facilitates the use of web formatting data in other applications like a brochure or e-mail. And it makes making changes to HTML documents quicker, cleaner and easier.[15]

Notes v. 'Net: The Battle between Groupware and Intranets

A few years ago the only collaborative software available was SAP's R/3 and Lotus' Notes. The promise of increased productivity and tremendous savings over traditional methods of communication made these products a top priority for many corporations.

Ravi Kalakota and Andrew Whinston write in their editorial for *Computerworld,* "[Organizations] may use R/3 for executive-level data, accounting, human resources management, central purchasing, sales planning and logistics, planning and control, local

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[13] Jim Hamerly, "Cascaded Style Sheets: Attractive Web Pages Instantaneously," *Intranet Magazine,* August 1996, p. 10.

[14] Jim Hamerly, Ibid., p. 13.

[15] Jim Hamerly, Ibid., p. 13.

purchasing and inventory management. Sales offices can use R/3 too. SAP's technology ties these distributed applications together."[16]

However, as Kalakota and Whinston point out, "It's extremely expensive. It costs from $5 million to $10 million to implement, which puts R/3 out of reach for all but big businesses with deep pockets. Many firms also have learned that implementing R/3 is the most arduous project a company can face."[17]

The introduction of intranets has forced the large groupware giants to rethink their strategy as the intranet slowly becomes the de facto groupware standard. In his article "Will the Web Mulch Lotus Into Compost?" Dave Trowbridge explains, "Lotus has already seen the handwriting on the wall, responding to the popularity of the Web with the introduction of InterNotes Web Publisher, which creates HTML pages of Notes views for publication on a Web server."[18]

How Intranets Contribute to the Bottom Line

Cost justification must be considered when an organization makes a potentially multi-million dollar decision about what kind of ICN they're going to employ. Ironically, however, a survey of 100 information systems professionals that have intranets at their companies found that 63 percent did not have to justify the cost of the intranet project. Thirty percent did justify the cost and seven percent didn't know.[19]

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[16] Ravi Kalakota and Andrew Whinston, "Intranets: The SAP Killer?," *Computerworld*, March 11, 1996, p. 37.

[17] Kalakota and Whinston, Ibid., p. 37.

[18] Dave Trowbridge, "Will the Web Mulch Lotus into Compost?," *Computer Technology Review*, September 1995, p. 13.

[19] Kim S. Nash, "Figuring the Dollars & Sense of Intranets," *Computerworld*, May 27, 1996, p. 109.

Alice LaPlante writes in *Computerworld*, "It's notoriously difficult to measure the return on investment (ROI) of groupware."[20] So it stands to reason that it is just as difficult to measure the ROI and contributions of intranets to an organization's bottom line. But Harry Fenik, an analyst with Zona Research, argues an intranet's return on investment "is not always cash. Payback can be a better way of working."[21]

Nash states the reasons most organizations are not forcing managers to justify the cost is because the cost is relatively little compared with groupware products. She explains that organizations can download various freeware servers and browsers from the internet and set up the organization's intranet site on an extra or under-used computer "laying around the shop."[22]

Future Impact of Java Software on Intranets

With the introduction of the Java software programming language from Sun Microsystems, the future of intranets has been greatly enhanced. In her article, "Java—The Future is Here Again," Marisa Urgo explains the significance of Java and its impact on intranet development. In fact, it may change the way the world uses computers in the future.

First, Java is platform independent, so any Macintosh, PC or UNIX computer can run the same Java application (called applet). Second, Java was designed to be small and not require much RAM (random access memory). So, as Urgo points out, "computers can

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[20] Alice LaPlante, "Numbers to Help Keep Score of is," *Computerworld*, June 24, 1996, p. 79.

[21] Nash, Ibid., p. 109.

[22] Nash, Ibid., p. 109.

be designed smaller, to perform more specialized tasks for a much cheaper price. The going rate for a computer of this type is about $500."[23]

Urgo predicts, "[Java] should have wide appeal for companies implementing intranets on a large scale. The small [Java] applications can be passed from computer to computer with little difficulty, and without the need for heavy 'bloatware' on [their] system."[24]

In "Intranet Applets," Julia King states, "With a browser-based application, it's much easier and cheaper to extend to users. You're not installing 50- to 100-megabytes of software code on every [employee's] workstation. Indeed, the applet resides on the server and can be downloaded on an as-needed basis by the browser software."[25]

In an *Industry Week* article, Taninecz quotes Horner saying, "The way applets are going with the Internet focus, where the browser essentially executes a piece of software instantaneously, it reduces software maintenance and rollout costs dramatically."[26]

Intranets and Corporate Culture

In "Developing Intranets: Practical Issues for Implementation and Design," David Trowbridge warns that some employees may experience a difficult transition when switching to using an intranet. "Collaboration is an organizational necessity generally characterized by a complex yet informal structure that has evolved to meet specific needs.

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[23] Marisa Urgo, "Java—The Future is Here Again," *Business Information Review*, June 1996, p. 107.

[24] Urgo, Ibid., p. 107.

[25] Julia King, "Intranet Applets," *Computerworld*, April 1, 1996, p. 49.

[26] Taninecz, Ibid., p. 49.

Any intranet solution must recognize this existing infrastructure and allow people to interact and work the way they normally would."[27]

Intranets and the Public Relations Industry

Prakash Ambegaonkar writes in his book, *Intranet Resource Kit*, "For a public relations agency, an intranet offers fast access to knowledge resources, as well as speedy and efficient document publishing and distribution. The intranet's improved efficiency of access to information enables a public relations company to quickly take advantage of publicity opportunities on behalf of their clients, to access competitive information that may affect clients' strategic messages and to keep up on emerging trends. Improved document management enables a public relations agency to process press releases more efficiently and to share critical client information among the various representatives assigned to specific accounts."[28]

Conclusion

In the article "Managing Intranets: Managers Speak Out," Roger L. Kay uses quotes from information services managers to best illustrate the rise of intranets and their effects on corporate culture and future job skills needed by their staff. In particular, David Simms, technical manager with Schlumberger, Ltd, believes "The most fundamental skills will be a desire to learn and an ability to adopt new methods as it becomes generally accepted that Web technology brings organizational efficiencies."[29]

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[27] David Trowbridge, "Developing Intranets: Practical Issues for Implementation and Design," *Telecommunications*, June 1996, p. 98.

[28] Prakash Ambegaonkar, *Intranet Resource Kit*, Osbourne McGraw Hill, Berkeley, CA, p. 221.

[29] Roger L. Kay, "Managing Intranets: Managers Speak Out," *Computerworld*, January 22, 1996, p. 64.

In his *Forbes ASAP* article, David Storm warns intranet managers that even after the site is up, their work is not done. The site has to be maintained, updated and kept interesting for employees to return. Storm writes, "An organization has to make a commitment to keep their intranet up to date, or it will just drift away into irrelevance—becoming dusty and vacant like that old town hall."[30]

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[30] David Storm, Ibid., p. 39.

Chapter Three

Procedures

Literature Search

Database searches were conducted at the Rowan University Library to find current related literature. The library's ProQuest database was used for primary research. The search examined periodicals dated from August 1995 through August 1996. All of the ProQuest database searches were conducted using the following key words: *intranet*, *college*, *university* and *school*.

A search of the ABI Business Abstract database yielded 628 references to the key word *intranet*. Sixty-two references were relevant. A search of the key words *intranet* and *college*, *university* or *school* found nine references; none was relevant. A search of the newspaper database (*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*) found 56 total references, of which two were relevant.

Other databases searched were the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) database and Rowan University Library book index. Both the ERIC database and the book index yielded no references.

The author located additional material in the Office of University Relations and the Office of University Publications at Rowan University. The July/August 1996 issue of CASE *Currents* contained one relevant article. The August 2, 1996 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* had one relevant reference article.

The author conducted several on-line searches of the internet for information, using Netscape Navigator 2.0 and the following internet search engines: Lycos, Excite, Yahoo!, Magellan and Infoseek. A search of the internet web site *The Intranet Journal*

(http://www.intranetjournal.com) was also conducted. The following key words were used during these internet searches: *intranet, college, university* and *school*.

Approximately 30,163 potential reference sources were found through the on-line internet search of the key word *intranet*, 28,527 for *intranet* and *college*, 13,839 for *intranet* and *university*, and 42,882 for *intranet* and *school*. Because these internet search engines can rate the relevancy of each finding, the author disregarded any search result under 95% relevancy. Eleven reference items were found.

The author attended an intranet seminar sponsored by Adobe Systems, IBM, Netscape Communications and Sun Microsystems on August 6, 1996 in Washington, DC. A folder containing two CD-ROMs and a packet of information about intranets was given to the participants. One item was found relevant to this study.

Survey

The author conducted a non-scientific survey to determine the feasibility of intranets and the current direction of internal communication networks with regard to higher education. One hundred college and university public relations professionals were selected at random, using the 1995 CASE *Directory of Advancement Professionals in Education.*

The survey will be used to measure the attitudes, opinions and roles of college and university public relations professionals concerning the use of intranets. The questionnaire is designed to determine the future impact of this new technology on public relations professionals and their job responsibilities.

To obtain the random sample of 100 college and university professionals, the author manually selected all the colleges and universities that list a vice president or

director of public relations. Of those listed, a starting point was determined, using the random table of numbers; every 27th person was selected until 100 names were chosen.

A meeting was scheduled with Dr. Donald Bagin, professor and thesis adviser, to submit and discuss a draft copy of the author's survey before distribution. Dr. Bagin's expertise was used to determine survey bias, unclear questions and improper surveying techniques. The result of that meeting was approval of the author's survey with some minor revisions.

Jim Anderson, research assistant with the Office of Institutional Research at Rowan University, helped the author by using a software package that crunches data to supply the statistics for the returned surveys. Results of the survey are presented and analyzed in chapter four.

The primary data findings from the author's survey and the secondary data found through the literature search served as the basis for the author's recommendations in chapter five.

Chapter Four

Findings

An intranet survey was mailed to 100 public relations professionals at four-year colleges and universities throughout the country. The survey utilized basic questions designed to determine their understanding of intranets, attitudes and opinions regarding the use of intranets. The survey was also designed to discover the current status and use of intranets in higher education.

One hundred names were randomly chosen from the *1995 CASE Directory of Advancement Professionals in Education*, using the systematic sampling method. Of the 100 surveys mailed, 56 were returned.

Following is a summary of the survey findings:

Question 1: *What type of internal employee communication process does your school use?*
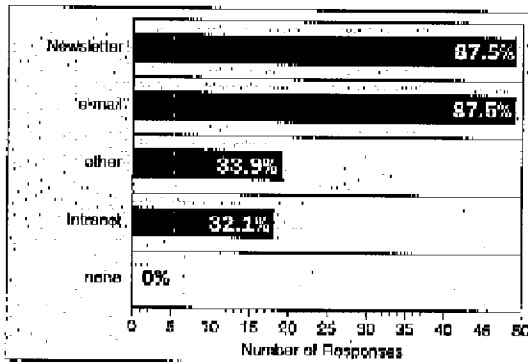
This question was asked to determine what types of communication processes the respondents' colleges and universities use with their employees. Respondents were allowed to choose as many answers as relevant. Almost 90 percent of the respondents use either a newsletter, e-mail or a combination of both. Almost 34 percent of respondents answered "other." These methods included: internet, faculty and staff meetings, weekly newspaper, voice mail, magazine, fax, US mail, list servs, monthly tabloid and an information routing system. Thirty-two percent indicated their school use an intranet (either web based or groupware). None of the respondents said they used no type of communication method.

Question 2: *Does your school have an internet web site?*
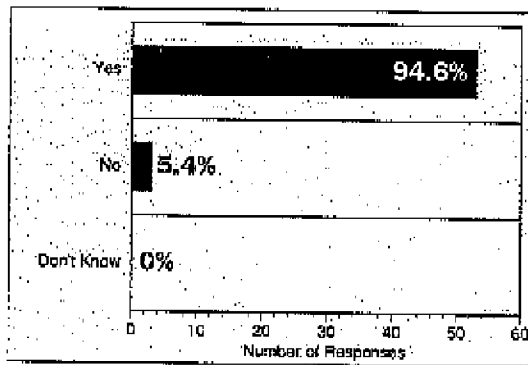
The purpose of this question was to determine if the respondent's college or university is currently using internet technologies. It is relatively easy to establish an intranet for employees once an internet site has been successfully established. More than 90 percent of respondents said their college or university did have an internet site. Only 5.4 percent (three respondents) said their college did not have an internet presence. Of those three, none of the colleges or universities use an intranet.

Question 3: *How familiar are you with intranets?*
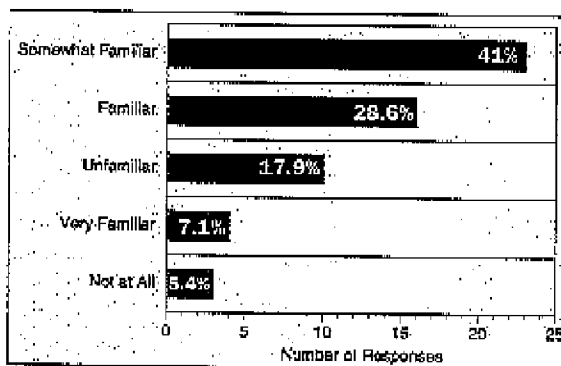
The purpose of this question was to determine how familiar the PR professional felt he/she was with intranets. Almost 70 percent indicated that they were either "somewhat familiar" or "familiar" with intranets. Seven percent felt they were "very familiar" while a combined 23 percent felt they were "unfamiliar" or "not at all" familiar.

Question 4: *How likely are you to adapt to new technologies like an intranet?*
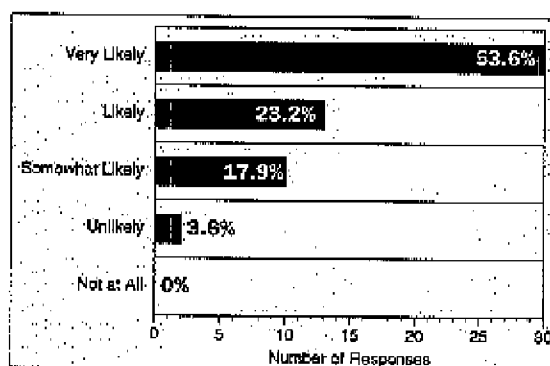
This question was asked to determine how likely current college and university public relations officers are to adapt to new technologies. More than seventy-five percent of the respondents answered "very likely" or "likely" to the question. Another 17.9 per-

cent answered "somewhat likely." Only 3.6 percent answered "unlikely" and none answered "not at all."

Question 5: *How likely will working with intranets be a future job function of school PR officials?*
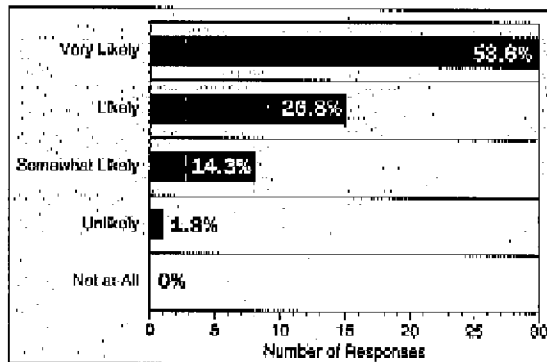
This question was designed to determine if public relations officials at colleges and universities believe working with an intranet will be a job function of the future. A combined 80 percent of the respondents believe that working with an intranet as a future job function is either "very likely" or "likely." Fourteen percent think it will be "somewhat likely." Less than two percent don't believe it's a likely job function. None of the respondents chose "not at all."

Question 6: *Should PR officers be a part of the planning process of a school's intranet?*
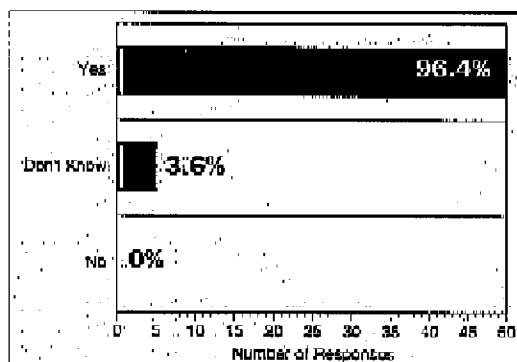
Over 95 percent of the respondents believed public relations professionals should be a part of the planning process of a college or university's intranet. Fewer than four percent answered "don't know." None answered "no."

Question 7: *Should PR officers take an active role in deciding the content of a school's intranet?*
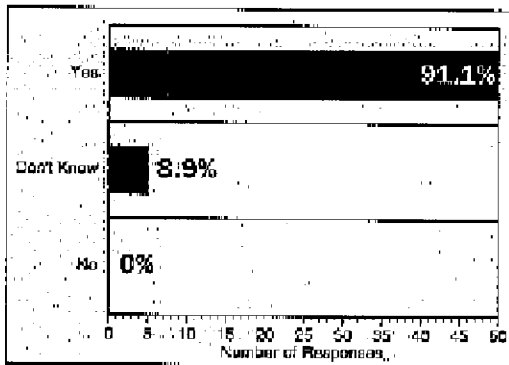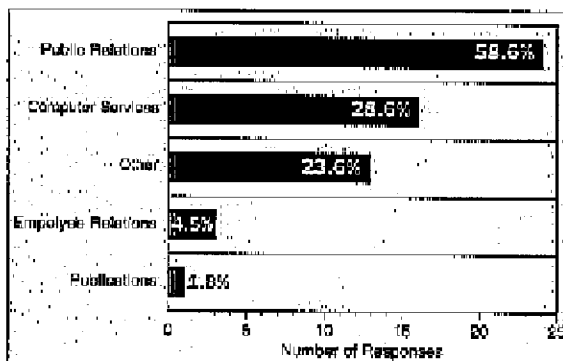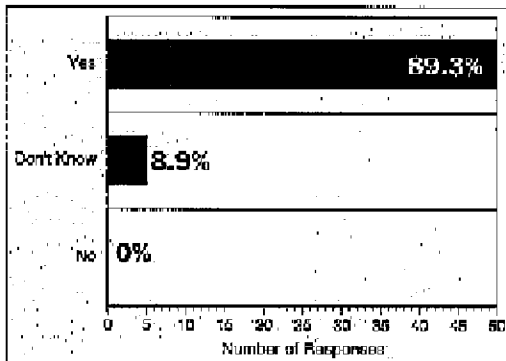

This question was asked to determine if public relations directors at colleges or universities want to participate in providing and structuring the information and content that goes on a school's intranet. Ninety-one percent of the survey respondents believed public relations professionals should take an active role in deciding what type of information is placed on a college or university's intranet. Approximately nine percent answered "don't know" and none answered "no."

Question 8: *Do you want to have a role with your school's intranet?*
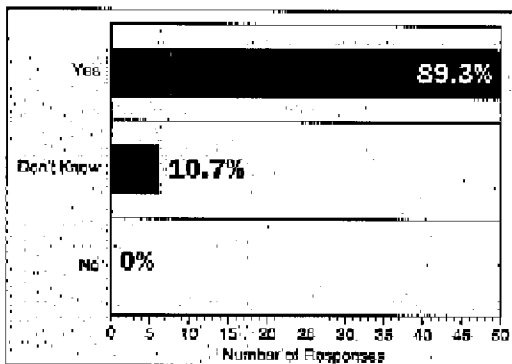
This question was asked to determine if college and university public relations directors or officers are interested in taking an active role in their school's intranet. Almost 90 percent indicated they would want a role with their school's intranet. Slightly less than 11 percent "didn't know" if they wanted a role and none responded that they wanted no role.

Question 9: *Which office do you think should be responsible for a school's intranet?*

A little less than 60 percent of the respondents thought the public relations office should be responsible for a college or university's intranet. "Other" received almost 30 percent of the responses. Almost 24 percent selected the computer services office. Of

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those who chose "other," 85 percent believe a college or university's intranet should be the responsibility of a combination of the offices listed. Other responses listed included "marketing" (5 percent) and "don't know" (5 percent).

Question 10: *Do you believe your school could benefit from using an intranet?*


This question was asked to determine if any of the respondents felt their institution could benefit from using an intranet. Ninety percent believed their college or university could benefit. A little less than nine percent selected "don't know." None selected "no."

**Question 11:** *Does your school use an intranet?*
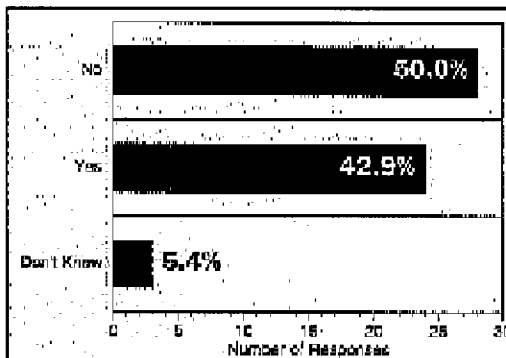
Fifty percent stated their school was not using an intranet. Approximately 43 percent of the respondents stated that their college or university is currently using an intranet. Another 5.4 percent didn't know.

Question 12: *How long ago did your school implement its intranet?*
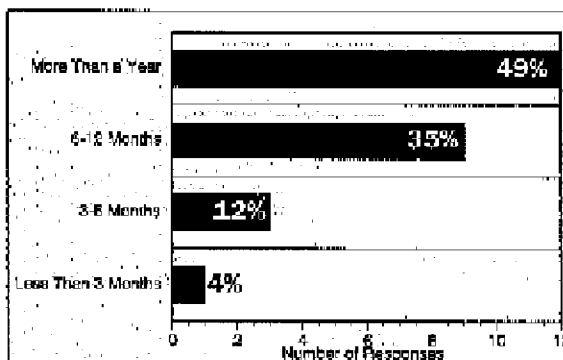
Of those schools using an intranet , 49 percent implemented their intranet more than a year ago. Thirty-five percent implemented their intranet between 6 to 12 months ago, 12 percent between 3 to 6 months ago and 4 percent less than three months ago.

Question 13: *What was your main role or function?*
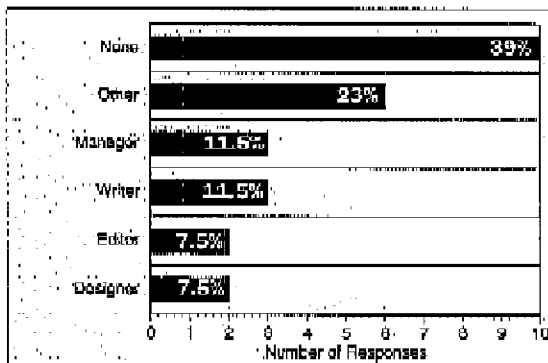
Of those respondents that answered yes to question 11, almost 40 percent of the public relations directors had no role or involvement with the production of their school's intranet. Twenty-three percent said they had a role other than the ones listed. These included: advisor, writer/editor, team member and committee member. Approximately 12 percent acted in the capacity of manager or writer. Another 7.5 percent acted as either an editor or a designer.
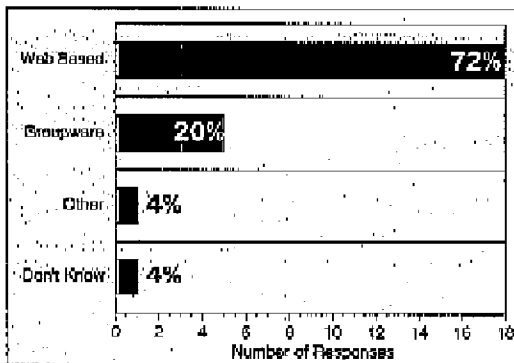
Question 14: *Which office on your campus is responsible for your school's intranet?*
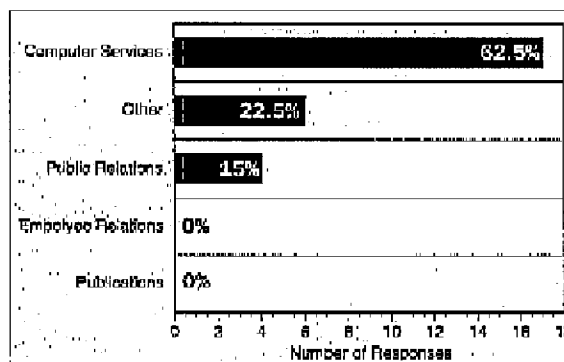
Of those respondents that answered yes to question 11, a little more than 60 percent answered that their computer services office was responsible for their institution's intranet. Approximately 22 percent answered that a combination of offices or a team of employees was responsible for their intranet. One respondent indicated their registrar is responsible for their school's intranet. Fifteen percent indicated that the public relations office at their school was responsible for the institution's intranet. None of the respondents indicated that their publications or employee relations office was responsible.

Question 15: *What type of intranet software package does your school use?*


For those who answered yes to question 11, this question was asked to determine what type of software package their institution uses. A little over 72 percent answered that they use a web-based software system. Almost 20 percent indicated that their college or university uses groupware for their intranet. Four percent indicated either they use a different software package or they didn't know which software package was being used.

**Question 16:** *Overall, how has employee response been to using your school's intranet?*
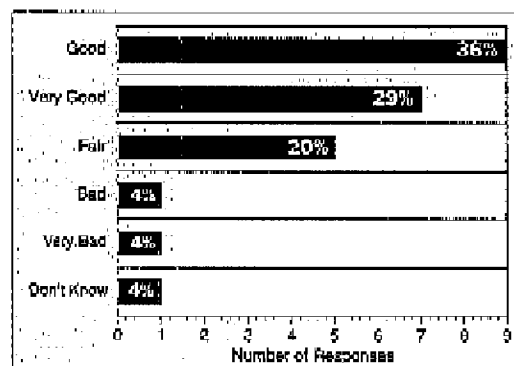
Of those respondents that answered yes to question 11, a combined 65 percent rated their employees' reactions as either "good" or "very good" when asked to rate employee response to using the school's intranet. Twenty percent indicated that they thought their school's employee response was "fair." The last three, "bad," "very bad" and "don't know" each received four percent.

Question 17a: *Does your college/university plan to implement an intranet?*
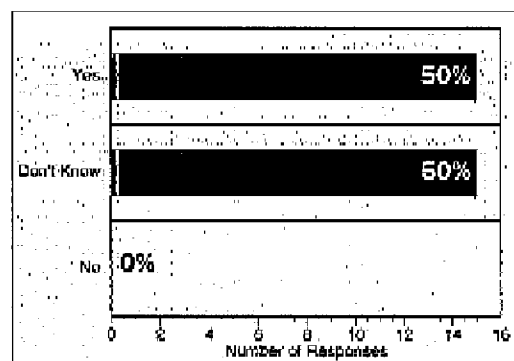
This question was asked to determine if any of the schools that do not currently have an intranet plan to implement one in the future. The responses were evenly split 50 percent each between "yes" and "don't know." None answered "no."

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Question 17b: *If yes, when do you think your school will implement its intranet?*
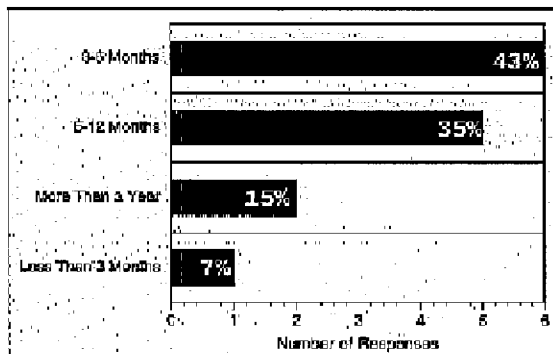
This question was asked to determine a time frame for those schools that plan to implement an intranet in the near future. Of those who answered, 43 percent predicted their schools would implement an intranet in the next "3–6 months," 35 percent predicted they would have an intranet in "6–12 months," 15 percent predicted "more than a year" and 7 percent predicted "less than three months."

Chapter Five

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to determine the impact of intranets on college and university public relations professionals. The author attempted to discover the nature of communicating with intranets, the effects intranets have on higher education and the impact intranets will have on the future job responsibilities of public relations practitioners in academia.

The author conducted a search of related literature and research relevant to this study. The findings are presented in chapter two. In addition, the author conducted a non-scientific survey of 100 college and university public relations professionals selected at random to determine the attitudes, opinions and roles of college and university public relations professionals concerning the use of intranets. The findings of this survey are presented in chapter four.

The author based the following recommendations on these primary data findings and the secondary data found through the literature search.

Evaluation of Survey Findings

According to the survey findings from chapter four, almost 90 percent of college and university public relations professionals surveyed believe that their school could benefit from an intranet. However, only 43 percent of the schools surveyed use an intranet. Almost 90 percent of the schools surveyed use e-mail to communicate with their employees and almost 95 percent have an internet site. Based on this information, the

colleges and universities that do not have an intranet could easily implement one because they already have most of the computer software, hardware and infrastructure already in place.

Survey findings also indicate that almost 70 percent of college and university public relations professionals consider themselves "familiar" or "somewhat familiar" with intranets. Additionally, more than 75 percent of them indicated they were "very likely" or "likely" to adapt to new technologies like an intranet.

More than 95 percent of those surveyed believe public relations officers should be a part of the planning process of a college or university intranet. This helps to explain why almost 80 percent believe working with intranets will be a future job function. Further, more than 90 percent believe that PR officers *should have* and *want* an active role with their school's intranet.

When asked which office *is* responsible for their school's intranet (for those who stated that they use one), 62.5 percent indicated computer services, 22.5 percent indicated a combination of offices and 15 percent indicated the public relations office. But, when asked who they think *should* be responsible for the school's intranet (open to all respondents), more than 50 percent indicated the public relations office, almost 30 indicated a combination of offices, and only 11.5 percent indicated computer services.

When those respondents who indicated their school uses an intranet were asked which type of intranet software package they use, 72 percent indicated they use a web-

based browser and 20 percent stated they use a groupware product. Additionally, when

asked how employee response has been to using the intranet, 65 percent indicated it was

either good or very good, 20 percent indicated it was fair and 8 percent indicated

employee response was either bad or very bad.

As for those respondents that don't currently have an intranet, 50 percent

answered that their school is planning to implement one soon. Of those who are planning

an intranet, 43 percent will implement an intranet in the next 3–6 months. Thirty-five

percent plan to implement one in the next 6–12 months. Fifteen percent plan to introduce

an intranet after more than a year and seven percent of the respondent's schools will

implement an intranet within three months.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are directly based on the author's original survey

research findings from chapter four and the author's secondary literature research

findings.

    1. The author recommends public relations officers at colleges and universities

       understand their campus' culture before implementing an intranet. The survey

       findings reveal that almost 30 percent of employees at schools who have an

       intranet rated it between fair and very bad. A thorough knowledge of the

       institution's campus culture will help acclimate employees to this new type of

communication process if it contains much of the familiar and shared traditions of the school.

2. With 50 percent of the surveyed schools planning to implement an intranet in the next year, public relations professionals will need to have a complete understanding of their role. The author recommends that college and university public relations professionals begin to familiarize themselves with the uses of an intranet in an educational setting.

3. The author recommends public relations professionals not only recognize their role with a school's intranet, but also their responsibility. Public relations directors and managers should be actively assisting with the development of a school's intranet. If a school's intranet is to be a successful employee communication tool, they need to identify key sources of credible information on campus, continually maintain and update the site, and act as a gatekeeper to keep "junk information" off the site.

4. Because this study did not correlate employee satisfaction with an intranet and the type of software product (i.e., web-based browsers or groupware) the author recommends public relations professionals research the type of ICN software package that will work best for their school. Consider the software training, the cultural shift of the institution and technophobic employees when choosing either type of ICN.

5. The survey findings in chapter four indicates a overwhelming percentage (72 percent) of colleges and universities surveyed prefer the web-based intranet over the groupware-based ICN. The author predicts this preference will continue as more and more schools (both public and private) face budget crunches and turn to less expensive means of communication with employees. The fact that 95 percent of the schools surveyed said they have an internet presence on the world wide web indicates they have most of the necessary parts in place to develop an intranet.

6. Survey findings are clear about the future role of public relations professionals at colleges and universities with intranets. More than 90 percent of those surveyed believe that PR officers *should have* and *want* an active role with their school's intranet and that their school could benefit from using an intranet. In addition, more than 80 percent indicated they believe working with intranets will be a future job function. With such a strong and almost universal endorsement for intranets, the author recommends undergraduate and graduate "education and school" PR students become acquainted with intranets. This is especially important considering more than 50 percent of the schools surveyed don't have an intranet, but will be implementing one within the next year.

In addition, the author recommends college and university public relations professionals who want to implement an intranet—but face opposition from upper management—to use the Beth Schultz's following top ten tips from "Hawking the Intranet," to convince administrators of the benefits of using an intranet.[1]

1. Make Friends in Other Departments

Educate managers in those departments about how intranets work and get ideas about how they may benefit from a private Web. The knowledge will help you present a comprehensive plan for management.

2. Devise an Overarching Strategy

For example, if an employee base is scattered across the country, then use an intranet to establish a sense of community.

3. Develop a Prototype

Piece together a prototype network, stocking it with information that all employees—whether they sit in corner offices or small cubicles—will find interesting. Then solicit feedback and revise the site before presenting it to management.

4. Prepare a Visual Tour

Seeing is believing. Provide your executives access to an existing full-scale, top-notch intranet. Find a good reference site and arrange a visit.

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[1] Beth Schultz, "Hawking the Intranet," *Intranet Magazine*, July 1996, p. 45.

5. Appreciate Corporate Culture

Make sure you reflect the corporate culture in the web site. If you work within a company that thrives on traditions, you don't want to create a flashy intranet home page.

6. Understand Your Audience

Some senior executives know technology and how to use it to achieve a business goal and others don't. Adapt your sales pitch accordingly.

7. Assert Your Authority

Show senior managers you have a comprehensive understanding of the corporate information infrastructure. Point out its strengths and weaknesses and be able to describe how the intranet can make things better.

8. Document Competitive Efforts

Assess how your competitors handle internal and external information distribution, collaboration and other business applications.

9. Explain the Dollars and Cents

Intranets can be cheap to implement. Make sure executives understand [the intranet] can be implemented without establishing a special fund.

10. Pick Your Battles

Don't wage war if you can't get all senior managers to buy into each and every aspect of the intranet you propose. Hopefully, you'll get reconsideration.

Finally, the author believes it's important to remember what Dr. Prakash Ambegaonkar says in his book, *Intranet Resource Kit*, "an intranet is not a one-size-fits-all solution to every organizational problem. However, it can ease problems of ineffective information creation and exchange. Adoption of an intranet paradigm can give good people better technology to manage the information infrastructure that will be required to improve overall productivity."[2]

Recommendations for Further Study

The author believes that this thesis has answered some basic questions regarding college and university public relations professionals and intranets. However, the author strongly recommends that the subject be investigated in the near future for the following reasons:

1. The computer software market is so dynamic and volatile that information presented in this paper will most likely be obsolete after one year. The author believes that as technology and software change, so will the job functions of college university public relations professionals. The author recommends that further research be performed two- to three-years from now.

2. Limited secondary literature and research information regarding intranets and higher education was available at the time the author performed his search.

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2 Prakash Ambegaonkar, *Intranet Resource Kit*, Osbourne/McGraw Hill, 1997, p. 7.

Additional research findings and literature should be available in the future and should provide a more complete and comprehensive picture of intranets in higher education.

3. The author also did not discuss the members of an organization who do not have access to a computer, who are afraid of new technologies and/or refuse to learn how to use them. The author strongly feels this subject should be considered as a separate thesis topic. The information gathered from a thesis based on this topic would be especially helpful to public relations professionals in all areas of the field, not just higher education.

4. This thesis does not address the benefits of two-way communication available with intranets. The author feels this topic has important benefits and implications for college and university public relations professionals and believes the topic warrants further study.

The author believes the preceding reasons for further study should be considered by anyone interested in the future of intranets at colleges and universities.

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Appendix

Intranet Survey for
College & University Public Relations Professionals
———————— ❖ ————————

1) What type of internal employee communication process does your college/university use? (check all that apply)

☐ NEWSLETTER ☐ INTRANET ☐ E-MAIL ☐ NONE ☐ OTHER _____

2) Does your college/university have an *internet* web site? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

3) How familiar are you with intranets? (check one)

☐ VERY FAMILIAR ☐ FAMILIAR ☐ SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR ☐ UNFAMILIAR ☐ NOT AT ALL

4) How likely are you to adopt and adapt to new technologies like an intranet? (check one)

☐ VERY LIKELY ☐ LIKELY ☐ SOMEWHAT LIKELY ☐ UNLIKELY ☐ NOT AT ALL

5) How likely will working with intranets be a future job function of college/university PR officials? (check one)

☐ VERY LIKELY ☐ LIKELY ☐ SOMEWHAT LIKELY ☐ UNLIKELY ☐ NOT AT ALL

6) Should PR officers be a part of the *planning process* of a college/university intranet? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

7) Should PR officers take an active role deciding the *content* of a college/university's intranet? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

8) Do you *want* to have a role with a college/university's intranet? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

9) Which office do you think *should* be responsible for a college/university's intranet? (check one)

☐ COMPUTER SERV. ☐ EMPLOYEE REL. ☐ PUBLICATIONS ☐ PUBLIC REL. ☐ OTHER _____

10) Do you believe your college/university could benefit from using an intranet? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

11) Does your college/university use an intranet? (check one)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

☞ If you answered yes, please continue. If you answered no, please skip to question 17.

12) How long ago did your college/university implement its intranet? (check one)

☐ LESS THAN 3 MONTHS   ☐ 3-6 MONTHS AGO   ☐ 6-12 MONTHS AGO   ☐ MORE THAN A YEAR

13) What was your main role or function? (check one)

☐ DESIGNER   ☐ WRITER   ☐ EDITOR   ☐ MANAGER   ☐ NONE   ☐ OTHER _____

14) Which office on your campus *is* responsible for your college/university's intranet? (check one)

☐ COMPUTER SERV.   ☐ EMPLOYEE REL.   ☐ PUBLICATIONS   ☐ PUBLIC REL.   ☐ OTHER _____

15) What type of intranet software package does your school use? (check one)

☐ WEB BASED (NAVIGATOR, EXPLORER, ETC.)   ☐ GROUPWARE (NOTES, DOMINO, ETC.)   ☐ DON'T KNOW   ☐ OTHER _____

16) Overall, how has employee response been to using your college/university's intranet? (check one)

☐ VERY GOOD   ☐ GOOD   ☐ FAIR   ☐ BAD   ☐ VERY BAD   ☐ DON'T KNOW

☞ please skip to question 18

17) Does your college/university plan to implement an intranet? (check one)

☐ YES   ☐ NO   ☐ DON'T KNOW

If you answered *yes*, when do you think your college/university will implement its intranet? (check one)

☐ LESS THAN 3 MONTHS   ☐ 3-6 MONTHS   ☐ 6-12 MONTHS   ☐ MORE THAN A YEAR

18) General information: (optional, for tracking purposes)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Coll./Univ.: _____

Address: _____

_____

City/State/Zip: _____

Please send your completed survey by March 31st in the enclosed SASE or fax it to 609-256-4322.
If the SASE is missing, please return this form to:

Daniel Murphy
PO BOX 400
Pitman, NJ 08071

Thank you!
———✦———

Name
Title
College
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear :

I am a graduate student in the public relations program at Rowan College. I am seeking the opinions of public relations officers at colleges and universities toward the use of intranets.

Specifically, I am trying to determine the attitudes, opinions and roles of college and university public relations officers with respect to using this new technology.

The attached survey is designed to determine your attitudes and opinions with regard the use of an intranet. The information I collect will be held in strict confidence and will be used to prepare my master's thesis. It should take less than eight minutes of your time.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer, you may fax your response to 609-256-4322.

Please return or fax your survey no later than Friday, March 31st. Thank you for your assistance.

Thank you,

Daniel Murphy
Graduate Student, Rowan College